



**RKM**  
Research & Communications

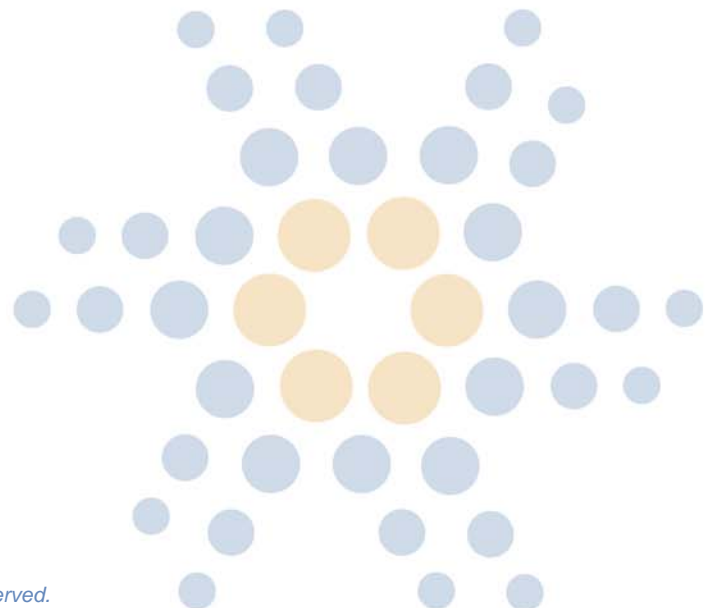
• • • *Dig deeper. Climb higher.*

# WHITE PAPER



## Perform™

How to measure a campaign's effectiveness  
to sharpen messaging and increase  
accountability





## Executive summary

This paper discusses how businesses can evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. It reviews many of the flaws in current tracking research methods. Currently researchers are not interpreting their findings in a framework that leads to actionable insight and guidance for crafting future marketing messages.

Perform™ addresses these concerns, yielding pre- and post-campaign data that can be used to evaluate a campaign and develop new ones.

## Introduction

In the drive for increased accountability in marketing, brand tracking studies have become the most common method by which managers take stock of marketing activities and decide on which next steps to pursue. Tracking studies are now commissioned to answer a wide variety of marketing questions, from identifying long-term trends in consumer preferences to assessing the effectiveness of short-term campaigns. However, managers may not be aware that despite its popularity, brand tracking research often fails to provide a complete and coherent picture of the market, undermining its potential to deliver the insights necessary for making informed decisions about future marketing endeavors.

In this paper, we offer an overview of how typical brand tracking studies fall short of client needs and introduce our unique approach to measuring campaign impact over time: Perform™. Employing pre- and post-campaign measurements and a sophisticated analytical model, Perform™ sidesteps the pitfalls of common tracking research to deliver truly valuable and actionable strategic insights to our clients.

## Problems with typical tracking studies

Tracking studies have become the standard tool to evaluate brand strength and marketing effectiveness over time, because the approach offers managers the ability to monitor a compact set of metrics over flexibly defined time intervals. In fact, brand tracking has become so standardized throughout the marketing industry that few managers would commission a study that does not provide the following metrics for consumer acquisition and retention:

- Brand awareness
- Advertising recall
- Brand reputation / brand image
- Likelihood to recommend
- Likely future use



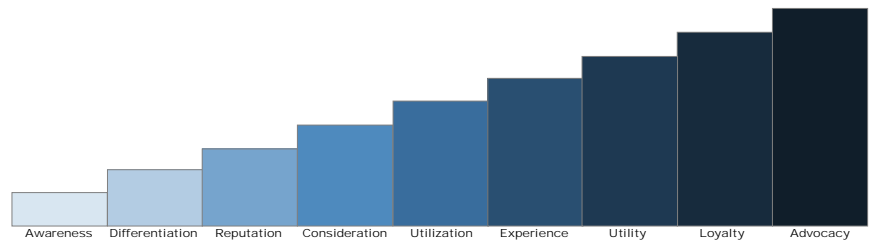
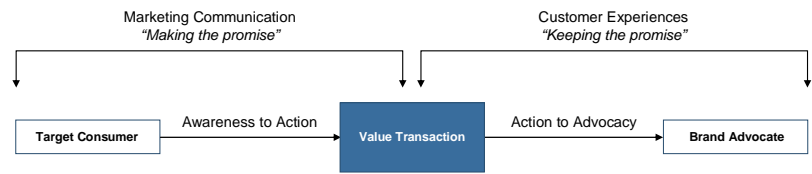
While much effort has been made to establishing the best practices for obtaining data for these metrics, far less attention has been paid to developing a conceptual framework for interpreting the findings. Some researchers even eschew interpretation altogether, in effect passing the burden onto their clients. As a consequence of this lack of interpretative rigor, tracking studies tend to shortchange managers by presenting little else beyond an unwieldy mass of descriptive charts and cross-tabulations of metrics.

Reviewing tracking results without an overarching interpretive framework is like reading a string of unrelated sentences in place of a story; both tend toward incoherence and incomprehension. After sitting through typical presentations of tracking results, managers are often left with critical questions unanswered. Are all metrics equally important? How does one metric relate to and affect another? Which upturns or downturns can be safely ignored, and which should be given the fullest attention? Without cogent answers to such questions, brand tracking studies fail to deliver on the promise of helping to bring accountability to marketing.

### Understanding the path to adoption and advocacy

To surmount the problems associated with typical tracking studies, the Perform™ methodology emphasizes rigorous measurement wedded to an equally sophisticated propriety model of consumer behavior, known as The RKM Path of Adoption and Advocacy. The Path works by treating each metric as a step toward either acquisition, i.e. initial trial of a product or service, or retention, i.e. customer loyalty. Each step along the Path presupposes that all previous steps have been traversed. Therefore, rather than simply telling managers whether a certain metric has risen or fallen, the Path presents a compelling and coherent narrative that illustrates the extent of marketing's ability to guide consumers toward brand adoption and loyalty.

The first half of the Path progresses from brand awareness to adoption. This portion of the Path focuses on the ability of brand marketing to move consumers from awareness to action by: 1) increasing share-of-mind; 2) creating meaningful product differentiation; 3) improving reputation; 4) increasing consideration; and 5) getting a target consumer to use a product for the first time. This approach to understanding customer acquisition enables managers to quickly identify the story behind the metrics and make informed decisions on future marketing endeavors. For example, a recent Perform™ study found that a marketing campaign had helped raise brand awareness in the market, but that progress down the Path had stalled at the Reputation stage for many customers. The study then dug deeper into the data to reveal the messages that marred the brand's reputation. This analysis not only allowed managers to account for the relative success or failure of a



campaign, but, more importantly, provided information that was essential for crafting marketing messages that neutralized the negative information that had hindered consumers' progress down the Path.

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The second half of the Path progresses from brand adoption to brand advocacy, modeling the process by which customers assess their usage experiences, repeat their usage and, ultimately, become brand advocates. This half of the Path provides a method for managers to gauge the impact of customer experiences with a brand, demonstrating the way in which non-marketing factors serve or hamper marketing initiatives. More specifically, the Path integrates operational, service and product attributes, along with a range of brand advocacy behaviors such as likelihood to recommend, into the basic marketing framework, thereby allowing for a clear understanding of the feedback loop that exists between current acquisition and future acquisition. This feedback loop is critical for managers to understand, because extra-marketing factors such as preference for competitors, word-of-mouth and consumer brand experiences all have an impact on a brand's future performance in the market. Accounting for these factors enables managers to better assess the performance of their marketing campaigns, set realistic goals for future marketing activities, and bring company operations into alignment with brand messages.



## Advanced methods and a flexible approach

Perform™ is able to provide managers with greater insights from brand tracking because it couples the Path framework with rigorous data collection standards, improved measurement and advanced statistical modeling procedures, such as structural equation modeling. These factors enable our models to exceed industry standards in explaining variations in consumer behavior. This ensures that all insights derived from the Path are statistically reliable in addition to being actionable.

The Perform™ methodology was developed with an emphasis on accommodating the needs and concerns of managers and providing a flexible approach to market research. Some managers, for example, may already have a continuous brand tracking program in place, but wish to supplement this research with in-depth analysis of an upcoming marketing campaign. The Perform™ study is able to address this need by collecting data in accordance with the timing of the campaign. This approach yields pre- and post-campaign data on the market that can be used to evaluate the impact of specific marketing activities on key metrics of performance.

Once managers gain an understanding of the basic impact of marketing and extra-marketing factors through Perform™, they may want to make additional inquiries into how to influence these factors, as well as how best to communicate any operational changes to the market. To address these needs, we have developed additional products that employ the Path framework that provide even deeper insights into the dynamics of acquisition and advocacy. Our Acquire™ product analyzes the market to identify segments of the population that are most inclined toward adopting and staying loyal to a brand, as well as the unique marketing messages that appeal to these segments. Our Advocate™ model focuses on the second half of the Path, delivering profound insights into how different service and brand attributes create value for customers, and how this value translates into brand advocacy and loyalty. These products can be integrated with Perform™ as modules into a single study or commissioned as separate research projects, thus offering leading-edge research techniques while maintaining flexibility for managers.



Find out how RKM Perform™ can enhance your brand

RKM prides itself on communicating our advanced methods in a manner that immediately lets managers know whether and how our products can inform their decision making. In this paper, we have given a brief overview of Perform™ and why it surpasses other tracking research products in terms of conceptual rigor, methodological precision and flexibility. For more information, contact RKM directly to learn more about Perform™ and other products in our suite of analytical tools.

